

PLATE AND PLATTER FOOD PRESENTATION ARRANGEMENT

PURPOSE: To improve cooks' and serving line attendants' knowledge and skills on proper plate and platter arrangement.

SCOPE: Proper food presentation requires skill and practice. Plate, platter presentation is not just a matter of placing food on a plate or platter and sending it out to a customer. The time and effort spent preparing a quality product, can be wasted through sloppy presentation and service.

GENERAL: A plate or platter should present a combination of foods working together. There should not be several separate components that happen to be on the same plate. A key element of major importance is that the portion size match the plate or platter size. It should not be crowded or look sparse. The size or portion of each item should balance with the other. The central focus of the center of the plate concept is the entree. The accompanying items should highlight the entree, not overshadow it.

GUIDANCE: SOME DOs AND DON'Ts OF PLATE PRESENTATION

1. Keep food off the rim of the plate. The well of the plate is where food should be placed. If there is too much food for the well of the plate, get a larger plate or reduce the amount of food.
2. Arrange the food in unity. The plate should look like one meal made up of several items. Do not have the food spread to all parts of the plate. The customers eyes should always focus on the center of the plate, not the edges.
3. Place the food on the plate in the most attractive manner. For example:
 - a. The best side of the entree forward.
 - b. The back part of the Duck or Chicken should face away from the customer.
 - c. The bone of a chop should face away from the customer.
4. Sauces can improve plate presentation when used properly. In arranging the plate do the following:
 - a. Serve sauce around or under food.
 - b. Products that are served in the sauce should not be disguised or masked by the sauce.
 - c. If sauce is to be put on top of a meat or vegetable, nap it with a thin ribbon and serve additional sauce on the side.

d. Be careful not to over sauce. Sauce is meant to complement and enhance the flavor of food, not hide the flavor.

e. Sauces should be kept light and more natural, not thick and pasty.

5. Refrain from using the same pattern over and over again. Particularly for buffet presentation, variety in platter arrangement is as important as color variation.

6. Garnish only when necessary. A garnish is only added to a plate or platter for balance and must be functional.

SUMMARY: Simplicity is the key. In food presentation, it is more attractive to have a simple plate presentation rather than an overworked, complex one. Elaborate designs often cause confusion, they are time consuming and unpleasant to the eye, if not done properly. Just keep it simple.